

THE

No 14

LATTER DAY SAINTS:

A POEM IN TWO CANTOS;

BY OMER,
AUTHOR OF "ELIZA OR THE BROKEN VOW."

Thus innocence and virtue rend the chain of oppression.

NAUVOO, ILL:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

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1841.

TO
PRESIDENT,
JOSEPH SMITH,
FIRST ELDER OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS,
THIS LITTLE POEM
IS INSCRIBED
AS A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT
FOR
DISTINGUISHED TALENTS AND UNBLEMISHED INTEGRITY;
BY THE AUTHOR.

together with the poor Indian in the
course is still onward, and it will continue to roll, until the kingdoms of this
world become the Kingdoms of our God and his Christ. AMEN.

W. I. A.

PREFACE.

It is with considerable diffidence that the author permits the following Poem to be laid before the public; but the very pressing and oft repeated solicitations of some of his intimate friends, for whom he entertains the highest feelings of regard, have, at length, prevailed upon him to give it publicity.— Should it be found deficient in interest or style, or disrobed of the classical and literary lore which distinguish the works of many of the writers of the present age, the author will find abundant room for excuse, as it is the first poetical production of his juvenile pen. The heart that is ready to give justice where justice is due, will give it a careful and attentive perusal, and take into consideration the youth and inexperience of the author, before he lays his verdict, of guilty or not guilty, before the world.

The first canto is intended to give a description of the situation of the church at the time of their expulsion from Missouri; the second canto was suggested to the mind of the author in a morning ramble on the 6th of April, A. D. 1841, which are thought

best to be placed in juxtaposition to each other, that the reader may draw a contrast between the situation of the church at the present time and the time of their Missouri persecution.

OMER.

P O E M .



CANTO I.

Fast sinks the sun behind Missouri's hills;
The azure sky with richest lustre fills;
On Mississippi's wide extended shores,
A beam of golden brightness sweetly pours.
The gentle rays of sunset's mel'wing glance,
In playful glory o'er her waters dance;
And all along the dusky wood he throws
A scene of gladness, splendor, and repose.
Unruffled zephyrs float along the air—
Assembled birds begin the ev'ning prayer;
Their mellow voices chant the parting lay,
As fast recedes the glorious "King of Day".

Night had scarce yet in solemn twilight clad,
The fields thro' which the playful waters sped;
When, lo! a man with looks supremely great,
With hurri'd step, re-crossed the line of State.
His looks portrayed a nobleness of soul;
His manners savor'd of the "Public School";
The anxious glance of his enquiring eye,
Was marked with wonder by the passer-by.
He flew for refuge to our noble State,

Sixpence.

And asked the succor of the good and great,
 "I fly," said he, with look sedately sad,
 "For refuge from the enemies of God;
 "Hark! hear the wailing of my people dear—
 "Behold the widow's and the orphan's tear!
 "Think'st thou, ye nobles of this mighty land,
 "Twas done by persecution's ruthless hand?
 "Is this the Freedom which our fathers bought?
 "Is this the glorious boon for which they fought?
 "Seest thou my people drenched in bloody gore,
 "Forced from their homes to climes unknown before?
 "Behold them seated 'neath a frowning sky,
 "And mourning for departed LIBERTY!"

"Upon our noble flag, with burnish'd gold,
 "Is "FREEDOM" written, prominent and bold;
 "And 'neath the shelter of its glitt'ring folds,
 "Is ample room for twice ten thousand souls:
 "Our constitution boasts the sacred clause
 "Which gives, to each, the right of "*equal laws*."
 "Then smooth thy brow and calm thy troubl'd breast,
 "For in our State thy people may find rest.
 "No heartless despots bear triumphant sway,
 "Who from the scenes of mercy turn away;
 "But hearts, both noble, generous, and great,
 "In justice wield the mighty helm of State;"
 Was the reply that dwelt on ev'ry tongue,
 And 'long the air the noble accents rung.

"Hosanna," burst from 'mong the weary train;
 "Hosanna," roll'd like thunder 'long the main;
 "Hosanna to the State that gives relief,

"Dispels our sorrow and removes our grief.
 "Oh! may her name, in hist'ry's annals shine—
 "Afford a model for all future time—
 "And other States be proud to imitate,
 "Her acts so noble, and her deeds so great!
 "Dire persecution drove us from our home—
 "In weary exile to your State we come;
 "You pour the balm of comfort in our wounds,
 "Like benefactors and like freedom's sons.
 "You feed the hungry, dry the widow's tear,
 "That lately fell upon her infant's bier—
 "Clothe the naked, comfort the depressed,
 "And set the captive prisoner at rest.
 "You hush the orphan's low and plaintive wail;
 "The pale and haggard cheek no more grows pale,
 "And gentle hearts that droop'd like with'ring flow'rs,
 "Now bloom to flourish in celestial bowers."

Oh! could my muse inspire some theme divine,
 Some lofty strain of poetry sublime;
 That I this scene might properly portray,
 And sketch the many blessings of that day.
 But oh, alas! my weak and youthful pen,
 (Which, perchance, I'll ne'er resume again,)
 Is far too weak the simple truth to tell,
 How in one day the great Missouri fell!
 She fell, an Atlas of Oppression's fate—
 Behold the stigmas that disgrace her state!
 While marching on in plenitude of power,
 Her flag proud flutt'ring on the top-most tower;
 Behold her statesmen marshal the divan
 Which bear the aspect of a Demon's clan!

The Gov'nor's order to "EXTERMINATE,"
 Received the insignia and the seal of State;
 And strait unto the *gallant* General—Clark,
 His *highness* (Boggs) dispatch'd a *trusty* spark.

Did Clark prove faithless to his *noble* trust?
 Did he wax faint and weary on his post?
 Ah no; but Lilburn found in him a *friend*,
 Whose heart was *noble*,(?) *generous*,(?) and *kind*(?)
 But kind *alone* to Lilburn and his clan,
 Who sought the lives and happiness of man!
 Most *noble* Lilburn, soother of mankind,
 Who calms the tempest in the troubled mind!
 To thee my muse would turn my wayward pen,
 That all may know what *noble* deeds you've done!

I saw thee seated in the chair of State;
 I saw thee mingle with the truly great;
 I saw thee—and a glow of burning pride,
 Lit up the gloomy brow on ev'ry side.
 But when, alas! the storm in blackness rose,
 And low'ring clouds began to interpose;
 We sought in vain the law's efficient shield,
 Which was thy high prerogative to wield!
 When persecution raised its hideous head,
 And mobs began our pleasant walks to tread;
 When fields were spread with devastation wild,
 Where harvests once in blooming plenty smiled;
 In vain we sought the favor of thine arm,
 To save the weak and innocent from harm!
 When gleam'd the spear in virtue's blood imbued,
 And frantic children o'er the plains were strew'd;

In vain did widows seek thy lofty seat,
 And orphans plead for mercy at thy feet!
 Be it known to all this mighty nation—
 These are deeds of his administration.

Oh, God of mercy—author of our faith—
 How long wilt thou withhold us thy relief?
 Oh! when will Heaven's drapery unfold
 The personage of whom the prophets told?
 And thou descend, with glory upon Zion,
 To "rule the nations with a rod of iron?"
 Oh! tarry not, nor lengthen thy delay!
 But, through the sky, prepare to wend thy way!
 That in this dark, this sad, and gloomy hour,
 Thy saints may feel the 'sistance of thy power!
 In vain did we for mercy "importune,"
 And ask redress for what Missouri done;
 For he who *was* our national high chief
 Refused his aid to mitigate the grief,
 Which lingers in the breast of every saint
 Who's felt the hand of sorrow and restraint.

Oh! where's the waving flag our fathers reared?
 Oh! where has Liberty disappeared?
 Oh! faithless offsprings of a faithful few,
 Say, where's the boon your fathers won for you?
 Have you been faithless to their noble trust,
 And level'd all their prospects to the dust?
 Has Columbia—the pride of all the earth—
 Withdrawn her arm from the domestic hearth?
 Are her fair daughters driven from their doors,
 Amid the storm that unrelenting pours?

And she refuse the extension of her aid
 To shield their bosoms from the hostile blade?
 That these are truths which no one can deny,
 There's hundreds ready now to testify.

Amid these scenes of persecution dire,
 Was there no proffer'd hand to quench the fire?
 Were there no friends, no people far away,
 To proffer peace and all our woes allay?
 Through the distance of the Eastern skies,
 Behold the peaceful radiation rise!
 Hark—'tis the noble sons of Illinois,
 Who raise aloud the patriotic voice.
 Let's hasten fast unto her happy shore,
 Where we may rest in peace forever more.

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CANTO II.

Scarce smiled the sun above the wood,
When on the mountain heath I stood;
I pensive strode and marked the while,
How blooming nature seem'd to smile.
All nature with unwritten song,
Began to pipe their notes along.
As sweetly on my ear they fell,
With melody I knew full well,
I gazed afar, with looks profound,
Upon the scenes that stretched around.
I viewed each nook, with pleasure's eye,
That reared their grassy summits high,
And clothed with redundant shade
Which by the spreading trees was made.
Each babbling rill their music play'd,
That glided from the mountain side;
Each gentle bird, with merry note,
Began the morning song to quote;
Each grazing deer, upon the plain,
Thrice snuffed the breeze, then fed again,
Until, by stealth, they ate their fill,
And flew away o'er rock and hill.
As on their wayward course they went,
The eager greyhound caught the scent;
But on they flew, and ne'er look'd back
Upon the persecuting pack.

Each hamlet and each mountain dell,
 Re-echoed back the rising yell;
 Till farther on they wend their way
 And trembling echoes die away.

On Mississippi's gaudy crest,
 The rays of rising sun were cast;
 And, as the zephyrs stir'd her tide,
 The fairy waves began to glide.
 Upon her face were seen to drift,
 The broader sail and veering skiff.
 As dashing on their trackless way,
 The rainbow trembling in the spray,
 Their creaking oars were faster plied,
 And quickly out of sight they ride.

Soon as my meditation broke,
 A foot-path dim I quickly took;
 And winding downward to the dell,
 Where cooling shades invite the will,
 I paused awhile, my limbs to rest,
 And "calm the tempest in my breast."
 The mem'ry of departed years
 Suffused my eyes with burning tears;
 I look'd to God in humble pray'r
 And dried the dew of sorrow there.

As 'neath the mantling shade I sat,
 And mark'd the beauties of the spot;
 The piercing sound of bugle note,
 Along the air was heard to float;
 And 'mid the loud and busy hum

Was heard the heavy peal of drum.
 Quick to my feet I sprang upright,
 And on the distance strained my sight;
 Then listened to each martial note,
 That o'er the woodland seem'd to float.
 I paus'd to get the rightful course,
 Then bending on with all my force,
 I sallied over bog and rill
 And gained the summit of a hill.
 Then on a slight and winding pass
 My footsteps quickly mark'd the grass.
 Fast bounding up the mountain side,
 With nimbler step than feet e'er plied,
 I quickly on its summit stood,
 Where slightly waiv'd the fragrant wood.

Slight roll the waves beneath my feet—
 The rifted rock the waters greet.
 Hark—the deafening cannon's roar
 Breaks 'cross the tide upon the shore.
 Fast on the side of distant heath,
 The flashing sabres leave the sheath;
 Then gleams the shining spear on high,
 And forth the ready falchions fly.
 Then quickly on my course I bent,
 Nor stopt to ask what all this meant;
 But hastening to the even shore,
 I quickly grasped the ready oar.
 As fast as thunders roll on high,
 As fast as lightning streaks the sky,
 As quick as fades the morning dew,
 Across the tide the shallop flew.

I coursed my way with rapid glee,
 Nor stopt to ask its augury;
 But quickly strode the path along,
 And soon rejoined the gath'ring throng.
 Was this gay band a hostile foe,
 Estranged from Liberty and Law?
 Did pant their souls for bloody strife,
 Or long to take their neighbor's life?
 Ah, no; my reader soon will see,
 They rallied for their LIBERTY.
 Why then did gleam the falchion bright,
 That so eclipsed all our sight?
 Or why did waving plumes so gay
 Receive the smile of morning ray?
 This simple truth I clearly saw—
 It was the summons of the Law.

Proud seated on his prancing steed—
 With eyes of fire and limbs for speed—
 A chief, with high and noble mien,
 Rode gaily o'er the grassy plain.
 He dash'd along with martial air,
 The slight breeze stirred his auburn hair;
 The red sash dangled by his side,
 And flashed his eye with burning pride.
 Escorted by his life-guards four,
 An aspect grand the chieftain bore;
 And, marching on the ready ground,
 The cannon shook the hills around.
 The flashing sword, and piping flute,
 All gave to him the grand salute.

This Chief was great—I knew him well—
He is the hero of my tale.

Three years had roll'd their months away,
Since first he enter'd in my lay;
And "change" had wreathed upon his brow
A smile as chaste as winter snow.
"Change," too, had made his people free,
And crown'd them with prosperity.

I gazed around with mark'd delight
Upon the scenes that met my sight.
Besides the grandeur of the train,
Were strewn along upon the plain,
The blest abodes of happiness,
Where saints in peace and safety rest.
They rest from persecution dire;
They tune anew the joyful lyre,
And chant the strains of melody,
Fired with sweetest symphony.
Blest are the gentle, early hearts,
Cheer'd by the flame which love imparts;
May they no other pleasure know,
Nor feel the sting of coming woe!

I saw the flag of LIBERTY,
Wave in the air its streamers gay;
And, 'neath its folds, the eager train,
Vowed its honor to maintain.
Oh! thou who guides the warrior's shield
That learns thy sons the spear to wield,
Look down and guard this noble band;
While they their Liberties defend.

